Chapter 16 Translation

The next day Horatia, while she sits in the garden with her other, says these things [this]: “dear mother, Cincinnatus was a brave and strong man. Have not women also shown such great courage?” Scintilla [says] “certainly, dear daughter, there were many women who showed very great courage, just as Cloelia”. Horatia [says]: “tell me about Cloelia, if you wish”. Scintilla: “Listen, Horatia. I will tell you about the courage of Cloelia.”

Many years ago, the Etruscans defeat the Romans in battle but they are not able to take the city. And so they surround the whole city; they place a garrison on the Janiculum hill across the Tiber; they guard the river with many boats. The Romans are not able to import grain into the city; the citizens are starving, but they resist bravely and the do not wish to surrender themselves on any term. At last the king of the Etruscans, Porsinna by name, himself puts forth [proposes] conditions of peace: he wishes to desist from the seige, but he demand hostages from the Romans. The Romans accept these conditions and hand over hostages to Porsinna. The Etruscans lead the army [down] away from the Janiculum and place a camp not at all far off from the bank of the Tiber.

Among the hostages are several women. One out of these, a maiden by name Cloelia, decides to escape from the hands of the enemy. She deceives the guards, flees out of the camp, and leads a band of women to the Tiber. She swims across the river and leads all the women into the city unharmed. At first Porsinna is very angry and orders the Romans to return all the hostages to himself.